

**Amendments to the Specification**

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 23 with the following, amended paragraph:

[0020] The end closure assembly 10 further includes an annular retainer ring 100 (Figure 5A). The retainer ring 100 is made of at least two arced elements that are movable relative to each other and thereby facilitate its insertion for use. The elements may be provided with sufficient structure to enable their interlocking. In the shown example, the retainer ring is made of three substantially identical arced interlocking elements 105A, 105B and 105C. It is contemplated that each of the three interlocking elements may be characterized by an identical shape. As shown in Figure 5B, the retainer ring 100 has two concentric portions, a radial inner portion 110 and a radial outer portion 115. The outer portion 115 has a greater outer diameter than the outer diameter of the inner portion 110. When the end closure assembly 10 is assembled, the inner portion 110 of the retainer ring 100 engages the annular lip-like ring 64 of the elliptical head 60 or atop the end ~~[[60]]~~ 50 of the domed-shaped element 41, depending on whether an elliptical head is used, as shown in Figure 1. Because of the different diameters, the outer portion 115 effectively has an annular flange 120. The annular flange 120 fits within the annular depression 25 of the bell shaped portion 20 of the elongated tubular shell 12. Also, the securing plate 80 holds the outer portion 115 of the retainer ring 100 in the annular depression 25. The fitting and holding in the annular depression provides a locking mechanism,

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whereby the end closure assembly 10 is retained within the tubular shell 12 and is able to withstand elevated pressure levels in the pressure vessel. The retainer ring 100 may be made from any suitable material such as plastic or metal, such as stainless steel, and the like.